

# Col. Lawrence Wilkerson: US Wants OUT — But Can't Say It Publicly

Is the United States trying to exit the Iran war — but unable to admit it? In this explosive interview, former Pentagon official Lawrence Wilkerson breaks down the real dynamics behind the US-Iran ceasefire negotiations. Support Independent media to remain bold: <https://patreon.com/IndiaGlobalLeft> Link for donation: <https://paypal.me/sankymudiar> Wilkerson argues that while Washington wants out of the conflict, it faces deep contradictions — including pressure from Benjamin Netanyahu, internal disagreements, and the absence of a clear “victory narrative.” We discuss: Why the US administration may want to exit the Iran war Whether JD Vance was coordinating with Israel The real reason behind stalled ceasefire negotiations US vs Israel tensions and strategic divergence Disputes over nuclear policy, US bases, and the Strait of Hormuz Why global anti-war protests are weaker than during Gaza Israel's intentions in Lebanon and the so-called ceasefire Long-term geopolitical consequences of the war Is this the beginning of a US retreat — or a deeper escalation? Watch till the end for Wilkerson's long-term assessment of the war's impact on global power dynamics. Follow us on Substack: <https://substack.com/@indiagloballeft> Twitter: <https://twitter.com/Indiagloballeft> Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/indiagloballeft/> Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61559411353392> Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/show/69Y9iCWUv8ha3ATsPWtWk0?si=ee1f0de3de094f17> Telegram: <https://t.me/+WNIqoiv1Rhg5NjEx>

## #Mudiar

Hello and welcome to another episode of \*India and Global Left\*. If you're new to the show, please hit that subscribe button. Also, consider becoming a YouTube member or a patron, and donate a small amount using the link in the description box. Without further ado, let me welcome our guest tonight, Col. Lawrence Wilkerson. Col. Wilkerson is a retired U.S. Army colonel and former Chief of Staff to U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell. Colonel Wilkerson, welcome back to \*India and Global Left\*.

## #Lawrence

Good to be back with you. I appreciate the opportunity.

## #Mudiar

What's your assessment of what the U.S. administration wants at this stage regarding its war on Iran?

## #Lawrence

I can say that in a very short paragraph. They want out, and they want out with victory—or at least a semblance of it. Right now, I think that's a wish that won't be granted in any way, shape, or form. So they're pondering what to do, and they really don't know what to do, because the war was launched with no strategy whatsoever, except to satisfy what Donald Trump felt was a request from Bibi Netanyahu that he dared not refuse. Now, there's much speculation in this country about why that's the case, because his staff—including his military, with the exception of Pete Hegseth, who doesn't know how to do anything but sycophancy—was not very favorable toward this war, if favorable at all. His vice president wasn't either, but he was overruled.

And they were all more or less dissenters, overruled by Bibi Netanyahu and his umbilical cord to Donald Trump. So the speculation in this country is rife right now about how badly Netanyahu is blackmailing Donald Trump. And that runs the gamut from really atrocious findings in the Epstein file, if we were to look closely, to Bill Clinton being bribed—essentially coerced—by Israel, which we know with about 95% certainty during the Monica Lewinsky scandal, because Israel knew about it, having tapped the Oval Office. So that's a real problem for Americans right now, and it's growing more intense every day—the question and the answer to the question: what is causing Donald Trump to seem so enthralled with Bibi Netanyahu that he persists in this very damaging war?

## **#Mudiar**

I interviewed Professor Marandi recently, and he said he was one of the delegates in the Iranian delegation in Islamabad. He said that during the talks, Vance and other U.S. delegates were constantly calling the Iranians—reportedly to Washington—but what Professor Marandi says is that it was actually to Tel Aviv and Netanyahu. Do you think he was calling Netanyahu to get permission about what he should say?

## **#Lawrence**

I'm not sure Trump was. I wouldn't put it past him—either one of them, Bibi or Donald. But I know J. D. Vance was. I know J.D. Vance was reporting directly from Islamabad to Netanyahu or to his government. I suspect Bibi himself, because Bibi probably wouldn't let that conversation go anywhere else. And on the plane back, he was fully debriefing Vance as he returned to the U.S.—fully debriefing on the entire talk sequence with Bibi Netanyahu. So the umbilical cord now has sort of an offshoot that goes to J.D. Vance. I think he's determined that his political future is going to be compromised mightily if he doesn't do that. And I have a different piece of advice for him, as I do for Tulsi Gabbard and a number of others in the administration: your future political career is gone if you stay with this sinking ship much longer.

Because I fully expect that the midterms will return the Democrats to power in both houses, impeachment proceedings will begin immediately. They're already being drafted by Democrats in Congress. Ro Khanna from California—a very decent congressman in my view, a very good man—

has politics, of course, to deal with. But I worked with him when we were trying to get the United States out of supporting Saudi Arabia in that vicious war they waged against Yemen and the Houthis, and I got to know him a little bit. So I think he's learned his lesson in that regard, and I think they're going to be successful. I believe Trump will be frog-marched out of the White House by federal marshals, becoming the first president in the history of the republic to be successfully removed through impeachment proceedings.

Now, Dick Nixon was removed that way too. But Nixon, when he saw the articles of impeachment brought to the White House for him to look at by his own party's leaders, decided he'd rather resign than be the first president removed from office through impeachment. So he resigned. Trump, though, will get the distinction of being—and maybe he'll relish it—the first one to actually be removed by that process. This is a bad place for all these people to be—from Hegseth to Gabbard to anyone who might have a scintilla of decency left in their bones in this administration—because they're sealing their doom for the future. At the same time, I have to admit, they might also be sealing the doom of the U.S. empire in a very significant way. So they'll have left quite a legacy when they do depart.

## **#Mudiar**

What do you make of the lack of clarity about the talks, and during the talks? For one, they said they were going to hold the talks, and they announced them. J.D. Vance was full of hubris during the press conference when he said they were backing out. And now Bloomberg has reported that the U.S. administration is keen on extending the ceasefire for another two weeks, which confirms what you said—that the Trump administration wants to be out of the war, but they're perhaps scrambling to find a narrative for how to present this as a victory. On Netanyahu, it's reasonably clear that he doesn't want the U.S. to stop the war. But if the U.S. administration is so desperate to end it, what's stopping them?

## **#Lawrence**

I think the reality of what it looks like to stop the war, and the reality of Bibi Netanyahu's influence on Donald Trump—and perhaps on other people too—I don't leave Congress out of that influence either. But let's back up for a moment and look at what we've done here. I go back to that headline in Haaretz, which I thought was pretty telling. It essentially said all Iran has to do to win this conflict is not lose, while all the United States and Israel have to do to win is produce a spectacular victory. Well, Iran's not losing—not yet, anyway—and the United States is not producing a spectacular victory.

So Donald Trump is using these talks—the Lebanon talks—that are supposedly meant to settle things. But President Aoun is saying, as long as Israel is in my country, nothing is settled, and I'm not sure I want to go along with this. And since he's winning—and by "he" I don't mean Aoun or the Lebanese government, I mean Hezbollah, of course—they're winning on the ground, just as they did

in July of 2006. And Israel increasingly knows that, so it's getting more and more vicious, killing more and more civilians—people who aren't even involved with Hezbollah—just dying because they're under Israeli bombs. And in Syria, the same thing is happening. You've got the government there now wondering if any kind of relationship with Israel is anything but deadly.

And you've got the Turks, of course, trying to convince them that it is, in fact, deadly to be allied with Israel or even close to them. So you've got the region just cooking right now, ready to spread in a heartbeat because of this war of choice the United States started to initiate, with no strategy whatsoever other than, "We'll do a little pounding, we'll do a little bombing, we'll do a little of this, we'll do a little of that"—most of which has cost us people's lives. Billions of dollars' worth of military equipment, aircraft, and all manner of other things have drained our supplies even further, to the point where, were we to get into a real shooting war with China right now, they would beat us without even trying, hardly.

So we've confused strategy so badly—if we ever had any at all—and so mucked up the region we're most involved in right now, that we're trying to put a strategic chapeau over the whole thing that supposedly makes sense by bombing China's Belt and Road Initiative, the southern railroad. You can't make this stuff up. The Israelis and we have been dropping round after round of ordnance on that railroad. And I have some news for them: the history of bombing railroads is rather grim. In World War II, we dropped more bombs on German railroads than you could shake a stick at, and the Germans rebuilt the railroads overnight, and the trains kept running.

So they're not really even achieving that strategic objective—which makes some sense if you think the United States and China might one day fight to disrupt that strategy. The capacity to reach, in 25 hours, from their Pacific ports to the heart of Europe, rather than in two and a half or three days—that's what this railroad promised for China, as do the other Belt and Road Initiative railroads that run through Russia, Central Asia, the Caucasus, and elsewhere. Ukraine is stopping much of that effort, which, as I said, takes about 16 hours to get to the heart of Europe. The southern railroad takes 25 hours to reach into the Caucasus, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and beyond.

So this is a strategic purpose that someone has developed—probably the Pentagon. I doubt Trump knows anything about it. Not Hegseth, either; probably the military staff in the Pentagon. But that gives it, at least, a chapeau of geostrategic purpose. And if you think war with China is inevitable, then it has a genuine purpose. I don't happen to think that way, but many in the Pentagon do. So, all to say, this is not turning out very well for the empire, and it's certainly not turning out very well for Donald Trump. And I'd say the same thing for Bibi Netanyahu, because I think the fate of Israel as a Jewish state is now sealed.

It will not be a Jewish state any longer once this subsides somewhat, because it can't present to the Jews who flock there a safe haven—which was the purpose of having this enclave in Palestine: to have a safe haven in their, quote, "homeland," unquote. Very questionable, but nonetheless preached that way for Jews, principally at the time from Europe, of course. We even know now—I

don't know if you've seen this research—we even know that there were Zionist, ultra-Zionist Jews there in the '30s and early '40s, working with, and still working with after the war had gotten wider, Nazis, in order to create the kind of fear in European Jews that would drive them to Palestine. We know that now.

There actually was cooperation between the Balfour gang, if you will, of Zionists and Hitler, in order to make the Jews feel like they had to leave Europe. You can't make this stuff up. This is really terrible when you think about it, and yet it makes sense from the perspective of how empires, sects, and groups have acted throughout history—using things later deemed heinous in order to further their purposes. And in this case, it was the Zionists, whom we're seeing demonstrate today that they're some of the worst people on the face of the earth. "Terrorist" isn't an adequate word to describe them. And now they're working their magic again on everything from Gaza to the West Bank, to East Jerusalem, to Syria, to Libya, or to Lebanon—and making a mess of it, as they generally do.

And we're in the middle of it—and Americans can't fathom precisely why. They don't know if it's just a little bit of blackmail, like the Israelis used on Bill Clinton, or a whole lot of blackmail, like they might be using on Melania and Donald Trump. In any event, I think more and more Americans are coming to the conclusion that this is not just grifting. It's not just money-hungry people—those people are there, to be sure, Donald Trump among them—but it's bigger than that, or deeper than that. And so their eyes and reasoning land on Epstein. It lands on that as the real reason Donald Trump is acting the way he is.

## **#Mudiar**

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson, I wonder if you could break down for us three things I've been thinking about. Maybe they're not entirely different, but they're connected. One is related to what we've been discussing—there's a tussle or a back-and-forth between what the U.S. administration wants from the war at this stage and what the Israelis want. That's one part. Then, secondly, the U.S. administration is trying to find a narrative of victory as they come out of this war.

And so all these talks—moving back and forth—maybe it's because they want a window to present this as a victory narrative as they come out. And finally, there's a genuine disagreement, as they say, on issues like the Iranian nuclear program, the Iranian ballistic missile program, their allies, and so on. I mean, these are the terms and conditions—or even questions about the future of U.S. bases in the region, the future of the Strait of Hormuz, and so forth. I mean, these are the terms in the ten-point agreement. So which of these three things are the dominant factors as far as the future of this conflict is concerned?

## **#Lawrence**

I think I'd have to say—and this is the reverse of what Donald Trump wants us to believe—but I think I'd have to say that the nuclear problem is at the bottom. It's important, but it's at the bottom.

And I say that because I don't believe this administration, and I know the military and other people of influence, even within this administration, think that Iran is a true threat to the United States. They just do not think that Iran is a threat to the United States. It's not the state sponsor of terrorism that we claim it is. In fact, Saudi Arabia beats it in that category all to hell. And it is not, and was not—and the intelligence community in 2007, 2008, somewhere around there, actually concluded this and hasn't backed off that conclusion, even with DNI Gabbard in there—that the Iranians had no intent to build a nuclear weapon.

I think that was a fair assessment—asterisk, footnote—I don't think that's a fair assessment anymore, and I'll come back to that. I'm not sure the administration knows what I'm going to say, but I believe it's a different situation now. On your wider array of questions, yes, we are searching desperately, as I indicated earlier, for some kind of rationale for victory so we can get out of this—not least because the Pentagon is telling the president, even with some opposition to it, that we have a new rule in this country: the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has as much access to the president as the Secretary of Defense does. And that's new. That's been the case ever since the Goldwater-Nichols Act. So if the chairman dissents with the secretary, all he has to do is pick up the phone and get an appointment with the president.

I haven't seen Cain do that, but I wouldn't be surprised if he did, and he might do it in the future, because Hegseth is becoming more and more unmanageable—from the bottom, from the uniformed end. So, what they're looking for now, I think, is some way to satisfy Bibi Netanyahu, and they're hoping this agreement with Aoun in Lebanon will do that. It won't. It won't even come close. Aoun has already said he's not sure he's even going to adhere to the ceasefire. And ceasefires in this region have a really strange definition, because none of them are working. Not a single one has worked. This one's not working, and I doubt very seriously that the one supposedly forged in Lebanon will work either.

## **#Mudiar**

One UN report says there have been 10,000 violations of the ceasefire since November—the ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah. I'm not making this up. Ten thousand.

## **#Lawrence**

That seems mild to me. And I bet there have been 20,000 in Gaza. He hasn't stopped killing. They haven't stopped killing Palestinians every day. It's a lesser amount, thank God, but he hasn't stopped it. And in the West Bank, it's just getting atrocious. Yesterday I was told by a Christian prelate in Jerusalem that the city is now a place of blood—I mean real blood, not just the fact that Ben-Gvir wants to go kill people at the wall. They're actually, again, forcing people out of their homes in Jerusalem. So none of this has stopped. It's still going on, and it's still atrocious. And like you said, it's probably 20,000 when you put it all together. The other point you made—the victory narrative.

I'm not so sure that Trump hasn't—if there's anything strategic to this whole thing, the war with Iran—had a victory narrative in the can all along. He keeps trying to ease it out, to test the waters, to see which statement will resonate or be convincing or whatever. And I think he's been singularly unsuccessful, even with his own MAGA group. Look at his attack, and Laura Loomer's attack, on Tucker Carlson right now. I mean, her attack that I watched this morning was fierce. Now, Laura Loomer can be fierce as hell, and no one believes her—or at least only the cultish people who respond believe her.

Nonetheless, this reveals a lot about Trump's thinking, I think, because I'm convinced that many of his most egregious tweets—his most egregious weigh-ins at night, when whatever he writes usually ends with “thank you very much for listening” or something like that—are actually done by Laura Loomer. So this is a potent force within the administration, even if it's insane, even if it's written and created by megalomaniacs, which it is. It still reflects Trump's desperation to a certain extent. And this attack on Tucker by Laura Loomer, I think, has got to be the worst I've ever seen anyone level on a former friend in the political atmosphere of Washington—and to use a surrogate to do it. And the surrogate here is Laura Loomer.

Fierce attack. Tucker is obviously getting to them, and he's getting to them because, basically, he's telling the truth. And he's telling the truth from the perspective of a man who knew Trump well—who talked to him virtually every day, who could call him, have him pick up the phone, and actually talk. This reflects how badly MAGA in general—but Tucker, of course, in particular—has fallen out with the group. It involves everything from the assassination of Charlie Kirk forward. And I think a lot of people in MAGA are waking up to the fact that, on one side of the argument, there's Tucker—and he's right—and on the other side are Laura Loomer, Donald Trump, Pete Hegseth, and they're wrong. And that's damnation in the midterms. They're going to get trounced in the midterms.

And by that, I mean the Republicans. And when he loses the Republican majority, he's got nothing left except force. And how do you use domestic force—to get legislation passed, to keep doing the things you're doing with ICE, to keep doing the things you're doing with Homeland Security in general, to keep doing the things you're doing through Scott Besson in the Treasury—an absolute idiot. You can't, because Congress will block every step you try to take. Just yesterday, a Republican congressman on the House Appropriations Committee asked his fellow committee members, “What are we doing here? This is more money than we spent in any year of World War II. We're going to spend over \$2 trillion on the Defense Department in a single year.”

This is insanity. Well, that's a Republican congressman. Mike Rogers, you'd better wake up, because your committee is going to turn against you quickly if you keep up this kind of profligate spending. And on the other side, the Democrats are telling their buddies exactly what that means for all other federal discretionary spending. And what it means is, it's going away—because it's all being consumed by trillion-dollar interest payments on the debt, now almost \$40 trillion, and by this almost

\$2 trillion going to the Pentagon. And if you look at the national security complex, it's well over \$2.5 trillion. This is unsustainable—completely unsustainable—even on a fiscal basis. So Trump's got to get himself out of this, but he doesn't know how.

## **#Mudiar**

What do you make of the muted—or, let me rephrase—the relatively weaker ground mobilization of public demonstrations against this war in the United States? There are some reports noting the differences compared to even during the genocide in Palestine, and even the protests over Ukraine. Is it primarily because of the image that Iran has in the West, or is it something else?

## **#Lawrence**

Let me be very, very crass and cynical—and yet, I think, absolutely accurate. The real thing that stirs Americans, God bless their souls, is a draft, is conscription. The last time you saw major, coast-to-coast demonstrations that were anti-war was Vietnam. And part of the impetus for that, if not the chief part, was the draft. Now the administration is letting it be known that they might activate the Individual Ready Reserve—the deepest reach they could make into the well of American military power, human-wise. And they're making noises about refurbishing, even more than they already are technologically, the Selective Service System. Just last week, NPR in this country reported on the highest number of—get this—officers as well as enlisted men and non-commissioned officers applying for conscientious objector status that they've ever seen.

Now, it's not huge numbers—because it's never been huge numbers—but it's triple or quadruple what it usually is. And these are people saying, "I sense I might have to go to this war. I sense I might have to be deployed. I'm going to get out." And, of course, there are lots of other things they can do, too—and they're doing them. They're declaring themselves non-deployable. They're getting pregnant if they're women. This is wreaking havoc in the ranks of the American military establishment, and it's only going to get worse. Once this gets out to the body politic, to the American people—that their sons and daughters are going to be vulnerable to conscription—then you'll see all hell break loose in this country.

And I predict, too, you'll see a lot of the 18- to 24-year-old group of young people—both male and female, but particularly male—who will go to Mexico or Canada, who will leave the country, be gone, and try to disappear. I'm talking about lots of them, because they don't want anything to do with this stupid war, and they've made that quite clear in poll after poll after poll. So we're playing with the devil here. We're playing with an extraordinary danger at the very root of the fabric of this empire. And if you want to see the American people get up on their hind legs—this is very cynical, but I think it's the only thing that will really do it—tell them you're going to take their sons and daughters and send them to these stupid wars.

## **#Mudiar**

One quick question on the ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon. Before I ask you one final question about your analysis of the long-term implications of this war—some reports or analysts are saying that this ceasefire was pretty much forced on Netanyahu by the Trump administration, given that Iran was hell-bent on including a clause that the ceasefire should also cover Lebanon. That was why, of course, they couldn't bring Hezbollah directly into the conversation, but they could bring in the government led by Najib Salam and President Aoun, and strike a ceasefire that has pretty much nothing to do with the substantive issues in Lebanon. Those analysts say the real issues in Lebanon are not the Iranian ballistic missile or nuclear programs, but rather the delimitation of the border, the security of people living both north and south of the Litani River, and, more broadly, the ongoing occupation of parts of Lebanon by Israeli forces. So what do you make of this ten-day ceasefire agreement—or conversation, let's say?

## **#Lawrence**

I think it's a farce, and I think President Obama knows that. I think the leadership of Hezbollah knows that, and I know Bibi Netanyahu and his clientele in Israel know that. He has said categorically, in his private meetings in Hebrew, "We are not leaving Lebanon—especially not south of the Litani River. We might even be a little further in than that. We are not leaving." And one has to go back and understand, over time, what Israel has categorically—and almost once a decade, if not more frequently—done to Lebanon. Let me give a little history to your listeners here. Lebanon, if they don't know—like me, 81 years old—Lebanon at one time was the pearl, the Paris of the eastern Mediterranean.

Everybody wanted to go to Beirut, sit in a coffee shop, sip coffee, and look out over the Mediterranean or whatever. Everyone wanted to. It was the economic powerhouse of the region. Then along comes Israel—1948, 1967, 1973. Israel made a decision: we must not let Lebanon continue to compete with us economically. So, periodically, we have to bomb the bejesus out of their economic infrastructure. Just go back and look at what Israel has done. Every time Lebanon gets a little sense of itself and begins to recover, they do it again. And we, the United States of America, are complicit in that. Look at what we've just built in Lebanon—one of the biggest, most expensive embassies in the world. Why? It's not for the diplomats. It's for the CIA, Mossad, MI6. It's an intelligence complex.

It's huge—much of it is underground—and it's not for diplomacy. It's for wrecking the region with intelligence assets, from Georgia to Armenia and Azerbaijan to wherever you want to operate next. That's what it's for. So we are as big a destabilizing agent in Lebanon—and in its ultimate recovery, which we don't want either—as Israel is. That's the reality of this situation. And you think Netanyahu is going to let this go away after putting all this time, effort, bombs, bullets, and bayonets into it? Not on your life. He'll own Lebanon before this is over, rather than have some sort of ceasefire that gives them partial integrity or anything like that. He wants their gas and oil, too. He wants everything in the eastern end of the Mediterranean. He's got Gaza.

He just expropriated Gaza when October 7th happened. So he's got all the gas and oil there—all the gas and oil in Israel's territorial sea—and he's going to get Lebanon's too. This is Bibi Netanyahu. Now, is it going to work? It's only going to work if the United States stays with him. And they're going to have to stay with him for at least another decade as he consolidates all this. And as I've said, I don't think he's going to have a state to operate from, at least not a Jewish state. I think he's done. I think he's out of there. He's certainly out of there by October. He's not going to win the election.

And if he tries, by force majeure, to ensure his continued leadership, I think the Israelis will rise up, take him to trial, and put him in jail. That's not going to fix things, but at least it would be a momentary delay in what Netanyahu wants to do. Then I think Israel is going to have to really examine what it wants to be in the future. It can be a democratic state that welcomes everyone—Christians, Arabs, you name it—or it can be a Jewish haven that's totalitarian, apartheid, and so on, and disappear. And it will disappear if it makes that choice. So we have to hope that someone in there, somewhere, gets a brainstorm, a light goes off in their head, and they realize they need a different approach to the Levant.

As long as the U.S. is helping to orchestrate their efforts against Syria, Lebanon, Iran, and elsewhere, that may be an impossibility. So we may just disappear with them, in the sense of having real influence in the Levant or in Southwest Asia in general. I think our influence there is waning mightily, and I think by the time any conclusion comes to this present conflict with Iran, we'll be gone—completely gone. We could be returning to a previous strategy called "offshore balancing," where we had no troops on the ground whatsoever in the region—few contractors, but no troops of real significance. Not in Kuwait, not in Qatar, no AID, no Prince Sultan Air Base, no U.S. forces on the ground in the region, including air forces.

And we would sail maritime assets in the North Arabian Sea and the Sea of Oman. If anything happened that we needed to influence, we'd use those assets to strike whatever was necessary. That's what we did for 40 years—a much better strategy, too. I'm not even sure, though, that when this is over, we'll have the military wherewithal to execute that strategy. We're going to take a licking in the next five to ten years. I won't be alive, but I think it's going to be a licking the rest of the world gives us—and gives us very strongly. Xi Jinping is going to take over the world's currency markets. He's said he's going to do that, and I believe him.

And within a decade, the renminbi will be the world's base currency, not the dollar. When that happens, we'll be so incredibly in debt and unable to deal with that debt by getting other people to buy it from us that we'll have to retrench majorly. I wonder if it will take us 20 or 30 years to do that. Then you're into the climate crisis big time, without the assets you need to meet that crisis, and you're also probably into a nuclear arms race—which you started and are now trying your best to keep up with, but are losing badly and therefore have an incentive to strike first. This is not a very bright future.

## **#Mudiar**

You already answered some parts of my final question. Nevertheless, I've been discussing this with many of our guests, so I'd still like to ask if you have something to add—about the long-term impact or implications of the current war we're seeing. With Ambassador Chas Freeman, we talked about the significance of Iran emerging as a power in the region, particularly its control over the Strait of Hormuz and, consequently, a significant share of the world's energy. We also discussed the weakening of the petrodollar system with Professor Prabhat Patnaik—what the future might look like with the disruption in the energy market, and how the surpluses from the two to three trillion dollar market are no longer being plugged back into U.S. financial assets.

It destabilized the dollar system, and the implications of that going forward are significant. We've also discussed a potential acceleration in the search for Chinese green energy technology, given the energy crisis we've seen across the Global South because of the choking of critical transit points. I should also add a couple more things. I think the conversations in East Asia are very interesting—as I read them in Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, and the Philippines—about seeking security guarantees from the United States, given the vulnerability they've seen in the Persian Gulf states with similar contracts.

And finally, we might be entering an age of slower economic growth, given that insecurity will pile up. As a Financial Times article today says, it's an age of hoarding—meaning more and more countries will stockpile fertilizers, petroleum, and businesses will hold on to more plastics, and so on. Which, as Econ 101 tells us, isn't good for the economy, because more and more resources end up locked away in unproductive ways. If you could add to some of the things I've said, in terms of the long-term implications of this war.

## **#Lawrence**

Well, in your last comments, you know, that already started somewhat with COVID, and a lot of people are looking for it to deepen and become even more profound, as you just pointed out. I think you answered your question in your question, but I'd like to point out a near-term aspect of it that you just briefly touched on, and I want to make sure everyone understands. I've said this on many podcasts, and I'm trying to get this message out: Iran has a second set of targets. That second set of targets will be hit, we must expect, with the same kind of exquisite intelligence, the same kind of devastation—think Bahrain and the oldest refinery facility in the Gulf, completely destroyed—and the same kind of circumspection, if you will, but expanded in terms of casualties that aren't necessarily U.S., or even perhaps connected with the U.S., compared to the first tier of targets.

What that's going to mean, if that happens—if they execute even a portion of that, let alone the whole target list—is that, as most economists agree, by the end of June we'll be looking at a global

recession. And by September or October, we could be looking at a global depression. Think 1928, '29, '30, '31, '32. That was the critical period we call the Great Depression in America. It brought FDR to the helm in the United States and, in some respects, led to World War II.

Not to say that this is necessarily the culmination of it, but what I'm trying to say is that the economic damage could be sped up—accelerated very quickly—and it would be mostly Iran that did it, and this war of choice, this stupid, idiotic commencement of the war by us, that caused it. And to add to that, we—those of us in the retired intelligence community, if you will, the retired military community—have been reliably informed, I think, that what's happening with Iran right now is similar to what happened, under different circumstances, with Ukraine early on or about midway through the special military operation, when we shared very sophisticated satellite data with the Ukrainians, and they used that to help them actually strike Russian nuclear response assets.

A very dangerous move—one we're all glad Putin didn't respond to in the way he had a right to, given that those were early-warning and strike assets in his nuclear complex that Ukraine hit. All that to say, we now think the same, or possibly an even better, satellite is being provided for Iranian use by China. That would mean this second tier of targets will not only be hit with incredible precision and devastation, but it will blanket the entire region. We're talking about taking out roughly 10 to 20 percent of Saudi Arabia's immediate production facilities across all categories.

We're talking about Ras Tanura, for example, which is running about 550,000 barrels per day or something like that right now—going down completely. When we did that in the petroleum disruption exercise in 2009 in Beijing, we had an exercise there featuring most of the countries in the world—Marriott, Lloyd's of London, AIG, all the big insurers. West Texas Intermediate and Brent Crude, the benchmarks, went to about \$208 or \$209 overnight. Insurers wouldn't insure, and shippers wouldn't ship. It didn't have anything to do with blocking Australia or moves like that.

It had to do with the destruction that was done to Ras Tanura. And this is going to be felt throughout the region if Iran is forced—and I think they're going to see it that way—to go to this second tier of targets. Then the empire will face a huge question: does it break the umbilical cord with Jerusalem and essentially say, "We're out of here, you're on your own"? Or do Epstein and whatever's bothering Melania and Donald Trump have such power that we can't even do that? What happens at that point? The global economy would be devastated.

## **#Mudiar**

Well, we'll leave it there, Col. Lawrence Wilkerson. Thank you so much for your time, and have a wonderful rest of the day.

## **#Lawrence**

You too, thank you.

## **#Ayushman**

Hi, my name is Ayushman. I, along with Mudiari Jyotishman, have started this platform. Over the last two years, we've tried to build content for the left and progressive forces. We've interviewed economists, historians, political commentators, and activists so far. If you've liked our content and want us to build an archive for the left, I have two requests for you. Please consider donating to the cause—the link is in the description below. And if you're not able to, don't feel bad; you can always like and share our videos with your comrades. Finally, don't forget to hit the subscribe button.